

explained to us, "The Council will not convene today. It is difficult to get a quorum on Easter eve. Everyone has personal affairs. . . . You see?"

"We see," replied Nikitin. "Shopping, Easter table, wine for the guests. . . . We can see that such affairs have left the councilmen no time to listen to the voice of the unemployed. But they will hear that voice. You bet they will!"

Reporters took notes. A councilman volunteered to take us to the mayor. We replied, "We have been elected to speak to the Council."

A reporter asked, "Something for the press?"

"Report that the delegation of the unemployed was here but the councilmen were too busy with preparations for the Easter table to talk with them. Report that we will come again."

After we left the Municipal Building, I suggested a stop at a tearoom. We found a cheap one patronized by coachmen and sat there in a dark and noisy basement, with heavy teacups before us. The delegates were disappointed, but I was in high spirits. "We have two weeks for the campaign before the next meeting of the Municipal Council," I said. "We shall use this time to strengthen our organization by elections in the factories." I worked out a plan. When it was time for the shift to change, men fired from a factory would assemble at its gate, stop the workers who came out, and call a flying meeting in support of the unemployed. One of our people would address his working comrades, tell them how we had knocked in vain at the door of the Municipal Council, and ask them to elect delegates to our Council.

Those were busy days. We had eight precinct organizations. I toured four southern precincts one day, four northern ones the next. The Soviet of Unemployed began to take shape. Eugene's health was failing rapidly and I remained the only intellectual in the group. All the others were workers, older than I and more experienced in party work as Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, or Socialist Revolutionaries. There was no time to discuss tactical questions. Somebody had to make decisions, and the group entrusted the command to me.

Now the question of the unemployed was in the headlines. The Union of Engineers asked us to include its representatives in our delegation to the Municipal Council. The Cadet-electors to the Duma made a similar offer. We thanked both groups and suggested they each send separate delegations.

My most vivid recollection of those days is of the endless muddy sidewalks along which I splashed from factory to factory. Each evening we met in one of the hot-meal stations—exhausted, but with a feeling that things were moving. The police did not bother us,